



STATE OF COLORADO

LACTATION ROOMS

**Prepared by the Division of Human Resources in the Colorado Department of Personnel & Administration
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What is a lactation room?

A lactation room is a clean, private place where nursing employees can relax enough to express milk. The milk is then stored and taken home for use when a mother is away from her baby. The room provides a quiet, relaxing atmosphere so the process can be as quick as possible. The room should be private and dedicated to lactation so it does not compete with other work functions or schedules.

What does the state gain by providing a lactation room?

Parent employees face a trying time as they adjust to the competing demands of both work and family. New mothers often feel guilt and anxiety over leaving their newborns as they transition back to work. If employees are anxious and preoccupied with family matters, productivity suffers. Making a few flexible accommodations may avoid the cost of replacing trained, experienced employees, shorten leaves, and help keep productivity up.

Nursing is endorsed by the medical profession as the preferred method for feeding infants. By supporting this practice and making it more convenient, the employer may accomplish several things.

1. A message of support and understanding is sent to the employee who feels better about her work place.
2. Some women may return from leave earlier because they can continue to nurse their babies.
3. Nursing provides antibodies, which contribute to the health of babies. Healthier babies can impact the use of family leaves.
4. In addition, if babies are healthier, there could be a decreased demand for health care services. This may impact insurance utilization, which ultimately affects costs.

Who can use the room?

The room is available to any state employee who is nursing. Give consideration to whether it will also be available to special guests as needed.

Who is responsible for what?

The agency provides the room and its furnishings. Several agencies occupying the same building may want to work in partnership on a room. For example, each department in the Centennial Building already had a refrigerator and the furnishings were donated. Each agency provides the lock combination to its own nursing employees.

The requirements are fairly simple.

1. *Space.* Inventory the space in the building to find a quiet, private spot. The space should be dedicated and not compete with work operations or other activities such as breaks, lunch, changing clothes, and ill employees. For example, one of the lactation rooms is located in what was extra space found in the ladies' room. It was not needed for work, was empty, and none of the tenants "owned" it.
2. *Electrical outlets.* The room should have one or more electrical outlets so it can accommodate different types of pumps. Employees are responsible for their own equipment.
3. *Furnishings.* Comfortable chairs are important to relaxation and small tables are needed for supplies. For example, one of the rooms has several chairs, two small tables, donated artwork, a lock box, and a wastebasket. Employees are responsible for keeping the room clean and neat.
4. *Storage.* Refrigeration of milk is required; however, this is generally not an issue because most work sites have refrigerators. Employees are responsible for storage of their milk.
5. *Scheduling.* This includes the use of the room and the scheduling time. In terms of use of the room, the employees resolve any issues. The use of time must be arranged with the supervisor if work time is involved. Some flexibility with breaks may be needed, especially initially.
6. *Security.* This includes the security of equipment and access to the room. Employees are responsible for their own equipment and supplies and should be encouraged not to leave them in the room. As stated previously, access should be controlled so the room can be used as intended. Remember, a lactation room is not a break or sick room, which would be disruptive or unhealthy for the nursing mother. Issuing and tracking keys can be a burden so a simple lock box may be the most practical. Someone will need to hold the back up key and provide the combination to employees using the room.

How can human resource specialists and supervisors help?

1. The most important step is to be sure that employees are aware of the room's existence. As part of the planning for family leave, the room can be explained. This may help the employee to decide to return to work sooner.
2. If a location does not have a lactation room, human resource specialists and supervisors can advocate the creation of one.
3. Create a supportive atmosphere for employees. Understand the benefits of nursing and what the state hopes to gain. Discuss how the program works and refer the employee to others who may provide additional information, e.g., those who have used the room.
4. Know who keeps the lock combination.
5. Be flexible in scheduling time for the use of the room. Nursing may need to occur several times a day. Work with the employee in arranging time to use the room.

Where are lactation rooms located?

There is a lactation room in the Centennial Building of the Capitol Complex area. There is also one at the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. For the most recent information, contact the agency human resources office at a specific location.

For more information, contact the agency human resources office. The Statewide Work-Life Coordinator at (303) 866-2391 can also provide information.